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ABSTRACT

This monograph explores various aspects of the publisher solicitation process for commercial distribution of educational materials. A brief matrix typology for the conceptual classification of various solicitation models or strategies is developed. This is followed by a discussion of one such model: the negotiated publisher solicitation or product brokering between a potential publisher and product developer with an explanation of the major dimensions along which publishers vary and how the publishing world is organized. A case history illustrates the use of the models in the various publisher solicitation activities undertaken in a major career education curriculum development project. Based on experiences in the project and the analysis of publisher characteristics and the procurement process, the author offers recommendations to assist product developers and sponsors in securing a publisher for commercial distribution of their materials. These include: (1) start the search for a potential publisher of a product that is being developed as soon as possible; (2) develop a series of special materials to assist the publisher in evaluating the product; and (3) the sponsor should give special attention to the identification and prioritization of the real goals regarding a product when selecting a publisher. (Author/JPF)

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PUBLISHER PROCUREMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS

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PREFACE

While there have, on occasion, been examples of notable success in the publication of products ensuing from educational research and development, by and large, the pursuit of sound systematic research and development practices do not, in and of themselves, assure wide-spread publisher interest in the resultant material. Indeed, eventual commercial publication is the exception rather than the rule.

Why this should be the case is, of course, subject to broad speculation. One factor that may contribute to the paucity of R&D products ever reaching commercial publication may be a poor understanding of the nature of developer/publisher/consumer relations. Another may be a poor understanding of publishers' decision processes. It may be that the nature of these relationships is too complex and the nature of publisher decision processes so varied across publishers as to defy generalization. It may also be that the bulk of federally funded product development activity is directed to those high risk, innovative efforts that are the least attractive to commercial venture. Commercial enterprise is, almost by definition, directed to an extant mass market, not to the speculative, or potentially short-term educational venture.

The purpose of this monograph is to report on initial exploration of one facet of the developer/publisher relationship, the very first aspect of that relationship--the publisher solicitation process. This monograph will develop a brief matrix typology for the conceptual classification of various publisher solicitation models, or strategies, according to the most frequently cited dimensions of presumed relevance to successful publisher procurement, and illustrate the use of those models in the various publisher solicitation activities undertaken in a major curriculum development project. After that, the monograph will summarize observations, suggestions, and recommendations resulting from those publisher solicitation efforts.

James A. Dunn
Principal Investigator and
Senior Project Director

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CHAPTER 1

A MODEL FOR TYPES OF PUBLISHER SOLICITATION

The implicit hope of all educational product developers is to see their products used widely by the audience for which they were designed. To achieve this goal, some form of cost effective publication is usually required. Unfortunately, the files of developers are full of rejection letters from publishers, which commonly include such statements as:

- "If we had only known of your product a year or two ago . . . We have just signed a contract to publish a product very similar to yours."
- "It would take us at least two to three years to develop a marketing plan, move your product into production, and begin effective dissemination. By that time . . ."
- "The nature of your product doesn't fit our current product line."
- "If only you had consulted us before you completed the development of your product, we might have been able to . . ."
- "Your product is very attractive from a teacher's point of view, but . . ."
- "Your bidding timeline was too short for us to respond."
- "We were unsure how much leeway you and/or the government would allow us to take with the product; consequently, we did not . . ."

If a content analysis of these and similar types of statements is undertaken, one can identify three areas of concern most frequently cited. They are 1) the limited amount of lead time typically available; 2) the degree to which the product can or cannot be modified to meet specific publisher requirements; and 3) the nature of the bidding process.

Given these three areas of major concern to publishers, a model for the description of publisher solicitation activity can be generated. The three dimensions of the model are amount of lead time, degree of product engineering, and the nature of the bidding process. A fourth area of concern is the size of capital investment the publisher must make, but that can be accommodated, in part, under

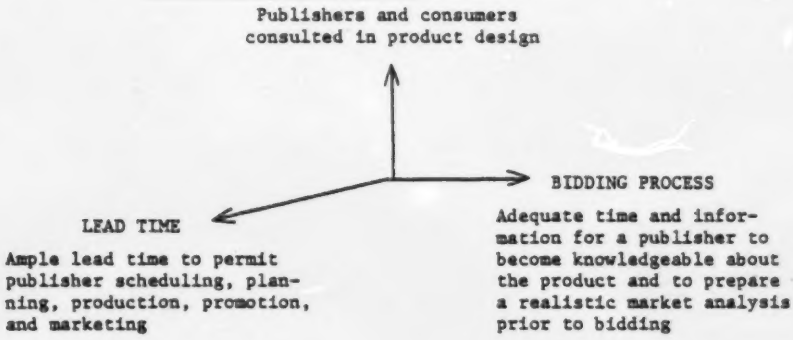
considerations of product design. The remainder then is the more mercantile consideration of degree of investor risk and potential profit gain.

MODEL DIMENSIONS

Figure 1 illustrates the three dimensions of the model. The dimensions may be considered as nominal or, at best, ordinal scales and may be subject to semantic distortion at times.

Figure 1

PRODUCT DESIGN


Publishers and consumers consulted in product design
BIDDING PROCESS
Adequate time and information for a publisher to become knowledgeable about the product and to prepare a realistic market analysis prior to bidding
LEAD TIME
Ample lead time to permit publisher scheduling, planning, production, promotion, and marketing

Lead Time. The general implication is that the longer the lead time the better. Major textbook publishers frequently point out that 23 states have statewide adoption programs that average six years in length. Consequently, the procurement activities of the publishers most active in those states focus on those products they hope to introduce three to four to five years hence. Often the products they begin promoting have not even entered production and in many cases may not even have been fully specified. Thus, from a large publisher's point of view, marketing specifies its needs for products over a fairly long time span. The actual procurement and production of those products, however, may be one to two years subsequent to target identification, but reliability of production of those products is essential. Consequently, much major textbook series development is under the control of the publisher itself, either as an inhouse activity or through a tightly controlled system of suppliers. With publishers such as

these, the R&D product developer may be whipsawed between long-range and often internal publisher acquisition policies and school trends, and the "innovative" programs that governmental agencies typically sponsor.

The lead time issue is further confounded in that the provision of long lead time is antithetical to external author submission of manuscripts for review. In the case of externally developed products, publishers like to see the entire product, so they can submit the materials to detailed analysis and review. There is an inverse relationship between the amount of lead time that can be provided, however, and the number of products that can be submitted for review.

With most publishers this problem is resolved by the simple fact that with most elaborate, complex, or large-scale products such as textbook series, comprehensive instructional programs, etc. (which by definition involve the greatest control over the product configuration), lead time is a function of corporate planning and development and of the long-range commitment of corporate resources.

Products accepted from external sources tend to be much shorter, less risky, and are either stand-alone items or prototypes for additional subsequent internal development. In the latter case the original developers often serve as consultants, technical editors, or series editors for the balance of the materials to be developed by the publisher.

Thus, there may be an inverse relationship (or more likely an inverted U-relationship) between the size of an externally developed product and the likelihood of commercial publication of that product.

Product Design. It is generally held that a well-designed product, engineered with an eye toward classroom acceptability and economic market viability, is desirable. How this is best achieved is another question.

Publishers are outspoken regarding the need for developers to work closely with publishers so that "realistic constraints" from production, marketing, and cost points of view can be applied to the materials. This makes great sense, in theory. Sufficient variance in publisher practice, however, raises some question regarding the degree to which early consultation assures publication. If anything

seems to characterize the publishing industry, it is the wide variance in assumptions regarding marketing and production held by various kinds of publishers.

Different publishing houses concentrate on different markets, and produce products accordingly. They then find it difficult to compete in other product/market areas. One publisher, for example, may specialize in high-cost, nonconsumable classroom resource or reference kits. Another publisher may concentrate on low-cost, high-volume consumable paper products. A third publisher may decide that with the wide availability of copy machines, the production of low-cost student consumable enrichment materials is no longer a viable option and elect instead to concentrate on teacher instructional guides and reproduction masters. And so it goes.

Regardless of a publisher's market appraisal, it is clear that, except in the most unusual circumstances, for a product to be picked up by a publisher, it must fit the publisher's product line--that is, it must be engineered to the specific market the publisher is trying to address and to the publisher's normal production, marketing, and distribution procedures.

Bidding Process. Materials may be made available to publishers on a wide variety of bases, ranging from a blind competitive bid system based on public announcement, as with the Publishers Alert Service through negotiated or brokered placement, to the use of paid author's agents, or even to the use of the subsidized, or vanity, press.

The method of product brokerage, or sustained advocacy, may be a more important one than has generally been assumed to date. The great variability among publishers, the typically long decision times involved, and publishers' reluctance to publish products from external sources without a thorough review and analysis of the completed product, all suggest that the importance of product brokering has been seriously underestimated in governmental and educational R&D circles.

In literary circles the use of author's agents is a practice of long standing; and a recent issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education reports on the rapid growth in subsidized publishing in the last decade. While it would be premature to suggest paid placement agents for educational products, or even subsidized

publication (although there are recent examples), it may be necessary to develop a sustained advocacy system for federally funded "high risk" educational products if one wants to magnify the likelihood of their being picked up by commercial publishers. Indeed, it is likely that the larger or more risky the product, the longer the period of advocacy required. Even if one questions the appropriateness of vigorous direct advocacy, some sustained personal commitment to the product would be necessary in order to maintain simple publisher accessability to the product and to respond to inquiries that interested publishers might eventually have.

The solicitation of publisher interest and the nurturance of that interest to the point of a firm offer to publish may involve a number of steps, ranging from an invitation to bid; the provision of specific information regarding the nature of the product, its history, origin, development, rationale; the proffering of special services such as technical consultation; continued availability of the developmental staff for second edition revisions; the development of special descriptive materials; the promotion of the professional visibility of the materials through continued exposure of the product at national conferences and conventions; to some assurance of the continued accessability of key staff for subsequent publisher activity, inservice training, and the like.

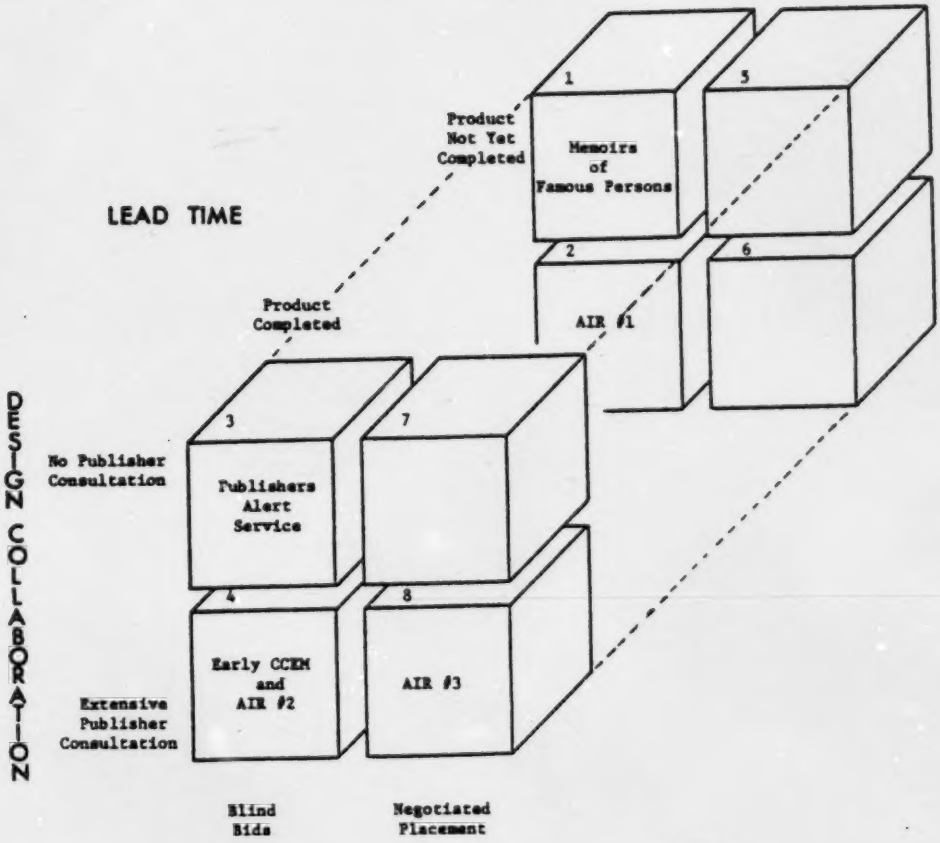
These, then, are a few considerations regarding each of the three model dimensions.

THE MODEL

If a schematic is developed with values for each dimension, as in Figure 2, publisher prospects can be considered for each cell and solicitation strategies generated accordingly.

Cell 1 in the schematic represents that set of conditions where the publisher is asked to bid competitively on a product not yet fully developed and designed without any opportunity for publisher input. While such publication arrangements do occur, they are quite rare. They are most commonly associated with the publication of personal memoirs or records of notable personages and/or heads of state.

Figure 2



Notes:

Lower Slice = *Engineered Products*
(Cells 2,4,6,8)

Right Slice = *Brokered Placement*
(Cells 5,6,7,8)

Rear Slice = *Long Lead Time*
(Cells 1,2,5,6)

The publication of materials under the conditions of Cell 2 occurs more frequently than under Cell 1 but is by no means common. Under this set of conditions the publisher can exercise some control through direct consultation with the author during the development period. Here, too, the types of materials typically published under these conditions are in the literary areas.

The conditions for Cell 3 are those under which much educational research and development has operated. Generally in the past, developers developed products completely and then submitted them for competitive blind bid via the Publisher Alert Service. This system has not proven a very effective means for procuring publishers for R&D products, however. Whether this was because the system was poorly tuned to the realities of the publication market place, or the products were of inferior quality, or some other set of circumstances is unknown. In light of the various comments offered by publishers with regard to the importance of lead time, the opportunity to influence the product, and the need to interact in order to develop a responsive bid, one can only assume that while the Publishers Alert Service was a useful mechanism for alerting publishers to the availability of products, it was not an effective means for promoting product publication.

The early history of the Comprehensive Career Education Model (CCEM) effort provides one example of publisher procurement efforts of the type subsumed under Cell 4. In the development of its School-Based Career Education Model, the Center for Vocational Education (CVE) sought early consultation with a publisher regarding product design--a relatively large career education publisher held a subcontract with CVE for the review and critique of CVE-developed material. CVE then proceded to develop products and eventually solicited blind competitive bids for those products.

The procurement was not successful, however. Consequently, the process of subsequent materials development was materially changed to approximate the conditions of Cell 2. Immediate consultation was undertaken with publishers for the purpose of redesigning the products so as to have maximal applicability to interested publishers and to initiate contact with publishers who might eventually be interested in bidding competitively on the redeveloped products. During this early period, no finished products were available for distribution to publishers. As the project progressed, however, AIR gradually moved from the

conditions of Cell 2 to Cell 4 to Cell 8, conditions under which products are developed in consultation with publishers, are complete when offered, and where interaction and assistance is offered to any publisher who requests it to assist them in the preparation of a bid believed to be in the best interests of the product and the government.

In conclusion, in Figure 2 product engineering is described only in terms of degree of publisher consultation inasmuch as the initial impetus for this analysis derives from experience with publishers and their typical remark that they were not consulted early enough. In point of fact, the concept of product engineering implies the configuration of a product on the basis of inputs from a variety of sources, including users (teachers), consumers (pupils), purchasers (various nonclassroom school district personnel), and "experts" (professional leaders). Further, data contributing to product engineering include not only consultation, per se, but empirical data regarding such concerns as product effectiveness and production costs.

Inasmuch as the purpose of this monograph is to explore various aspects of publisher solicitation rather than product design, and inasmuch as a great deal has been written regarding systematic educational product design and development, the description of the model, for simplicity of presentation, reflects only a primitive notion of product design, i.e., "consultation with publishers." Rather than the cells in the bottom layer of the model (the degree of product engineering), of greater interest to this monograph are the cells to the right of the midline, i.e., the right slice of the model. These are the various configurations of negotiated placement with the publisher, i.e., with product brokering.

CHAPTER 2

NEGOTIATED PUBLISHER SOLICITATION: THE BROKERED PRODUCT

As the conditions surrounding the search for a products publisher approach the conditions of the right slice of the model, publisher solicitation becomes more and more a negotiated solicitation. As such, the developer begins to serve as the product's broker as well as the product's developer--a role quite common for all but the most exceptional authors in most areas of professional writing.

The brokerage process, however, requires not only intimate knowledge of the product but also of the publisher with whom one is trying to broker. The process of brokerage is the process of fitting together the needs of two different parties so that an effective union can be realized. To do this, the product developer must have a much greater awareness of the complexities of the publishing business, a better understanding of the major dimensions along which publishers vary, and how the publishing world is organized.

DIMENSIONS OF PUBLISHER VARIATION

Publishers may be considered according to a number of characterizing dimensions. At least eight different characteristics seem to be a minimal number to consider in attempting to understand the potential relationship of a product developer with a possible publisher.

Volume. The most obvious dimension, and the one used most frequently, is company size, i.e., volume of sales. Based on volume of sales, approximately two dozen publishers dominate the vast majority of educational materials.

Product Type. Closely related to sales volume is product type. Publishers produce a variety of types of products. Some by their very nature involve a much larger volume of sales than others. Publishers tend to specialize in specific types of products. Examples of product types and publishers often associated with such product types are presented in the following list:

Product Type	Publisher/Product
Textbooks	Scott Foresman
Student consumable materials	Behavioral Research Labs
Classroom resource kits	Science Research Associates
Instructional support materials	American Guidance Service
Subscription material	My Weekly Reader (Ginn-Xerox)
Professional books	McCutchan Press
Newsletters	Changing Times
Magazines and journals	Learning Today

Prestige. A third dimension of publisher variation is degree of prestige associated with the company name. This is often associated with size. Major publishers invest heavily in corporate image building and make every effort to cultivate a strong positive image. Image is not necessarily a function of size, however. Some lesser volume companies may still maintain positions of prestige within their specific market areas. Alfred Knopf, for example, is a relatively small publisher but is generally considered to be a prestige house. Similarly, Olympus Press, which publishes nothing but career education materials, has a very respectable reputation within the area of career education.

Origin. The prestige of a company may often be related to the origin of the company. Publishing companies may derive from a variety of antecedent backgrounds. In some instances, concerted efforts are made to capitalize on the prestige of the antecedent, or parent, organization. Some companies are *major independent publishers*. These are the older, more solidly established organizations. In many instances they may have been subjected to corporate takeovers but in spite of their affiliation with a larger industrial giant, they maintain their own corporate integrity and visibility. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, for example, is a component of Bell and Howell, and SRA is a subsidiary of IBM.

Other publishers are *spin-offs of major independent publishers*. Typically, these organizations maintain an identity affiliation with their parent organization. For example, Prentice-Hall Learning Systems is a very small organization, involving only a small number of employees. It is a spin-off of a major publishing house and carefully maintains its obvious membership in the Prentice-Hall family.

A third type of publishing company is a *spin-off of a major industrial concern.* In this instance, as in the preceding, the new publishing house is apt to be relatively small and inexperienced, yet it derives from an industrial giant and derives prestige from a clear affiliation with its parent sponsor. Examples of such publishers are Westinghouse Learning Press and Xerox Learning Systems.

A fourth type of education materials publisher is a *spin-off of nonschool-related publishing activities.* These are often instructional materials publishers that spin off from magazine or news service publication efforts. Changing Times Educational Service and Capitol Publications Books Division are examples of this type of publisher.

Small publishers deriving from prestige companies often tend to be associated with the major market sector regardless of their sales volume. Thus, Westinghouse Learning Press or Prentice-Hall Learning Systems can easily be considered major publishers even though their portion of the publication market might actually be quite small, while some publishers with a much larger volume of business but not the prestige or visibility associated with the major publisher or major industry spin-off are considered thin-market publishers.

Obviously, the prestige of the company in part derives from its origin, and companies often attempt to maximize the prestige of their corporate image by either emphasizing or disguising their early origins.

Product Image. Also associated with prestige or publisher image is the degree to which the publisher attempts to manage product impression. Such impression is directly related to the amount of money available for front-end investment and the type of product being produced. Obviously, companies having large sales volumes or producing products that yield higher margins of profit, and companies with major prestige investments to maintain will and can invest considerably more in the physical appearance of the product than some of their competitors. This dimension is often referred to as "product quality," but in actuality it is the quality of the image of the product rather than the instructional efficacy of the product. A more appropriate term would be "image control" rather than "quality control." Slick products graphically illustrated and with attractive packaging are well

known in educational circles. This type of product, as suggested, is often associated with "major" publishers. There is, however, very frequently, as Komoski has pointed out, a large number of products that are attractively packaged but of shallow substance. Unfortunately, the opposite is often true for products developed under federally sponsored research and development programs. Typically, products developed systematically through R&D activities may be more substantial as instructional materials than their physiognomy warrants. Often thin-market publishers are forced to publish with minimal front-end investment in typesetting, paper, artwork, multicolor presentation, or packaging.

Speed of Decision Making. These five dimensions are perhaps the most commonly considered dimensions of publisher capability. A sixth and perhaps equally important publisher characteristic from a developer's point of view has to do with the publisher's speed of decision making, i.e., the swiftness with which decisions can be made and production undertaken. Speed in the decision to move in new directions, speed in the decision to commit to the publication of a new product, and speed in the implementation of product production are important concerns from a federal R&D point of view. Speed in these areas seems to be a function of centralized authority within the organization and the accessibility of that authority to the developer. The accessibility and centralization of authority in a publisher seem to be inversely related to size of the company. However, this does not always hold true; in the case of companies that are spin-offs of other larger parent organizations, the spin-off company may be quite small in terms of the number of individuals involved in the operation of the company, but major decision making may be deferred to the Board of Directors, who are principals in the parent organization. Thus, there is centralized authority for operation but not for decision making.

Locus of Production. A seventh dimension related to centralization of authority and corporate size is locus of production. Those organizations that are not committed to the utilization of internal typesetting, production, printing, etc., can often respond faster. This is typically a characteristic of smaller companies. It is only the larger companies, or spin-offs from larger companies, that are committed to using the resources of the larger corporate family.

Marketing Style. Finally, the eight dimension that might be considered characteristic of publishers is marketing style. Publishers vary widely in the degree to

which they maintain their own sales force, sell via sales representatives, or sell via the mails. Direct mail sales, of course, are the most economical way to market materials, but a direct sales force provides aggressive promotion of the product.

In considering the selection of a publisher, then, different publishers offer different combinations of attributes, some of which may be to the advantage of the government, some of which may be to the disadvantage of the government. The product developer knows the kind of impact the government would like to make with the R&D product; the task is to choose a course of action in publisher solicitation that will tend to maximize the likelihood of procuring a publisher of the appropriate type. This, of course, implies an open and explicit partnership between the product developer and the product sponsor. The project monitor must be able to reflect adequately the wishes of his or her sponsoring agency and join with the project developer in the decision making necessary to select the type of publisher with which to "broker" or "place" the product.

PUBLISHER CLASSIFICATIONS

In the late 1960s, shortly after OE publication guidelines were revised to permit product developers to copyright and publish instructional materials developed under federal support, the prevalent notion of the publishing process was one in which the developer would simply make the products available to publishers on an equitable basis, i.e., Cell 1. This view of educational publishing was essentially undifferentiated. It was assumed publishers would bid, pick up the products, and move them into the commercial market. The early efforts at the public dissemination of federally funded R&D products, however, was not altogether promising. This resulted in an increasing awareness on the part of educational R&D workers of the distinction between "major" publishing groups and so-called "thin-market" publishers.

Major and Thin-Market Publishers. Major publishers were concerned with sales in the hundreds of thousands. Thin-market publishers were concerned with sales in the thousands or tens of thousands. This was a convenient differentiation and allowed developers to look beyond the 30 or 40 "name" publishing houses to the several hundred ancillary publishers that also had national scope but not volume of business.

It was not long, however, before major publishers were differentiated into *textbook publishers*, such as Scott Foresman and McGraw-Hill, and resource or *reference kit publishers*, such as SRA.

Thin-market publishers were still seen simply as smaller versions of these types, i.e., companies somewhat smaller in total volume of sales but which nevertheless produced either textbook or resource materials.

A second category was often considered to be a component of the thin-market publisher--the technical or *tradebooks section*. College textbooks and professional books certainly did not have the sales volume of elementary and high school textbooks. Whereas technical books were frequently carried as a service item by major publishers, they were often the basic stock-in-trade of smaller publishers. Fearon and Wiley & Sons are examples.

In the 1960s a new type of "name" publisher began to emerge--typically subsidiaries of major corporations making an initial entry into educational publishing. They might be considered thin-market publishers in terms of their experience and volume but major publishers in terms of their relationship with parent corporations. Xerox Learning Systems is a good case in point, an educational products spin-off of the Xerox Corporation. Westinghouse Learning Press, a subsidiary of Westinghouse Learning Corporation, which was itself a new company formed in 1967 as a subsidiary of Westinghouse Broadcasting Corporation, is another example.

Whether Westinghouse Learning Press is a major publisher and McKnight Publishing Company (a tradebook publisher) a thin-market publisher is a moot point. The boundaries between publishers in terms of their markets, interests, or origin are extremely diffuse at best. The field is marked by extreme heterogeneity. Prentice-Hall Learning Systems, for example, is an extremely small company (some five or six persons), operating as a specialized subsidiary of one of the twenty or so Prentice-Hall publishing companies, each of which is relatively independent in acquisitions and marketing.

Thin-market publishers might be classified as smaller "general publishers" such as McKnight, Creative Publications, Guidance Associates, or TimeShare; "specialized publishers" such as Olympus; "newsletter publishers" such

as Changing Times or Capitol Publications; or "distributor-publishers," i.e., instructional materials distributing companies that act as manufacturers' representatives for a variety of products but that have found it more profitable to begin publishing their own line of materials, such as Melton Book Company.

Micropublishers. There is another extremely large segment of publishers that have neither national reputation nor major, or even modest, "thin-market" volume. Many, however, are publishers of some substance and have some market penetration in their respective areas. They might be termed micropublishers. This is a group of very small publishers, numbering around several thousand. They are small organizations typically consisting of only a few employees. They represent the entrepreneurs who are entering the publishing business. Many started in the 1950s and 1960s in much the same way that Alfred Knopf started Knopf Press on borrowed money after World War I. Olympus Press is one such publisher that has gained a solid reputation in the field of career education and is now considered a significant thin-market publisher in that area but is quite unknown in almost any other circle. Career Research Associates, Impact Publishers, California Learning Simulations, Educulture, Instructional Media, Inc., Learning Concepts, Inc., Education Achievement Corporation, and Accelerated Development, Inc., are a few other examples.

Micropublishers may be venture capitalists who felt the instructional materials field was a potentially lucrative one--instructional materials jobbers who found a larger margin of profit in selling their own products, printers who expanded their fields of operation, or experienced bookmen who tired of working for a "large house" and wanted to do their own thing.

The micropublisher field is a difficult one to contact, however, inasmuch as the individual publishers have neither national visibility nor, as is often the case, affiliation with organized publication groups such as the National Association of Textbook Publishers. Micropublishers are often under-capitalized and over-extended and conduct much of their marketing through either direct mail or manufacturers' representatives.

Micropublishers do offer certain advantages, however. They are, almost by definition, the high-risk takers in educational publishing. They derive their

competitive edge by being able to move into an area faster than the larger publishers, and because they often have a more targeted audience with which they deal and which they typically know better in some ways than major publishers. While their per unit cost is typically higher than larger volume publishers, their capability for making decisions regarding new product acquisitions is considerably faster. In addition, their typically low overhead for marketing allows them to keep retail costs quite low.

Because of the extremely varied nature of micropublishers, however, the publisher search effort must be much more intensive and may take much more time and effort than has typically been assumed in the past. It also implies the need for considerable flexibility on the part of a project developer to negotiate with potentially interested micropublishers. This also implies more freedom on the part of a project developer to reconfigure, condense, expand, partition, or modify the products under development, and in suggesting possible options to potentially interested publishers. Possible arrangements for the mutual sharing of early investment costs, perhaps through special buy-back arrangements, and long-term author/publisher liaisons may also be significant micropublisher inducements.

Public Service Publishers. Finally, the last category of publisher is the public service publisher, i.e., a public service agency that publishes public domain materials at cost in order to make them available for school use. Two examples of this type are the Florida Curriculum Center and the National Curriculum Coordinating Centers for Vocational and Technical Education. Other examples are university presses and publishing groups affiliated with specific research and development centers and regional research laboratories.

Given, then, that a more flexible posture with regard to publisher solicitation is necessary, more extensive product planning will be required so that the product can be engineered to have maximum publication/production flexibility. Early dialogue with publishers regarding the design of products, early relations with publishers to support their immediate involvement and commitment to the product, and negotiated targeted publisher solicitation rather than blind, competitive bidding procedures suggest that in the future publisher solicitation activity will more likely be of the type represented in Cell 7 or in Cell 8 rather than in other cells of the classification model.

MICROPUBLISHER IDENTIFICATION

In order to broker a product with a publisher it is, of course, necessary to identify an adequate set of potentially interested publishers. Because of their size, and visibility in the field, it is relatively easy to generate lists of various types of major publishers. This is also true, but to a somewhat lesser degree, for thin-market publishers. The greatest potential for rapid publication of innovative educational products, however, rests with micropublishers. These are the publishers that exist in greatest numbers, but have least visibility. Therefore, the identification of potential micropublishers poses special problems. One must not only identify potentially interested companies, but companies that also have sufficient resources to handle the product, and who can be committed early enough in the process so that cooperative working relations can be established, or at least maintained for a reasonable period of time after the development of the products is completed.

In this regard, two separate approaches might be used: one, a "convention solicitation" method; the other, a "prolonged staff involvement" strategy.

The obvious approach to major publisher solicitation is to compile a list of publishers with which one is already familiar, obtain their addresses, and contact them directly. The second alternative is to make contact through one of their sales personnel, field agents, or representatives. A third approach is to look up publishers in the yellow pages of the telephone directory, or to identify possible publishers through a review of instructional materials commonly available in school libraries and classrooms. All of these procedures tend to maximize the likelihood of identifying the larger or more highly visible publishers. However, none of these procedures is particularly suited to the identification of that large contingent of publishers comprising the micropublisher group.

Because of the low visibility of the micropublisher, the developer must depend, to a certain extent, on serendipity. The potential occurrence of the serendipitous event can be maximized. Because micropublishers have exceedingly small, or in most instances, nonexistent sales forces, they must maximize their potential client contact. They typically do this through booths at trade fairs and professional conventions and through direct mass mailings.

Convention Solicitation. The most obvious strategy for a developer, then, is to use trade fairs and professional conventions as the principal forum for initiating contact with micropublishers. Indeed, the process is to the decided advantage of the developer.

At professional association conventions, such as the American Educational Research Association, the Association for Supervision in Curriculum Development, the American Personnel and Guidance Association, and the National Education Association, a developer may contact 100 or more thin-market publishers in the space of a single day. If the developer is armed with a printed product description and is prepared to conduct his own materials display, perhaps in his own hotel room, an effective prescreening of a large number of micropublishers can be effected. From that point, further mail and/or telephone correspondence can be arranged. In this situation, then, the developer "works the convention hall" just like any other product agent.

Since the economic resources of most micropublishers are limited, their participation at trade fairs and conventions often tends to be geographically determined. Hence the product developer should expect to attend a variety of such conferences in a variety of locations.

Prolonged Staff Involvement. The second strategy the developer can use is much less efficient and even more dependent upon serendipity, hence prolonged staff involvement is often necessary. Inasmuch as the second major marketing effort of micropublishers is direct mail advertising, the developer can systematically collect from colleagues, especially public school administrators, the unsolicited "junk mail" advertisements for educational products that bombard school personnel almost daily. These direct mail advertisements can then be screened, catalogued, and followed up with a direct mail campaign in reverse. Developers can routinely distribute form letters to such advertisers, inquiring about their potential interests and offering to discuss potential availability of their products via the telephone if the interested party would call. This effectively screens the casual inquiry and allows the developer to be somewhat selective in his response. This step is highly desirable inasmuch as the developer needs some procedure for prioritizing his response activities.

CHAPTER 3

A CASE HISTORY OF SEQUENTIAL PUBLISHER SOLICITATION

EARLY EXPERIENCES IN THE CCEM PROJECT

The earliest efforts to obtain a publisher for the Comprehensive Career Education Materials developed at Ohio State University reflected the traditional approach to publisher procurement followed at that time. To understand this early effort, it is useful to review briefly the status of the CCEM project as of Ohio State University's completion of the first contingent of CCEM units.

In 1971 the U.S. Office of Education funded the development of four major career education programs. One of those programs was the school-based model, which was to provide a thorough program of career education for grades K-12. This program came to be designated the Comprehensive Career Education Model, or CCEM, which was under the general directorship of the Center for Vocational Education at Ohio State University. In the early stages of the development of the CCEM program, CVE canvassed the nation to find candidate school districts in which this new approach to educational practice could be developed and implemented. Six school districts spanning the United States were eventually selected.

Originally the task of these six school districts was to assemble the appropriate instructional materials and organize a comprehensive program based on those materials. The program was to be infused into subject matter areas such as English, social studies, mathematics, and science.

The concept of the program found wide public support, but there was a lack of available instructional materials. According to public response, career education was wanted and needed, but the materials necessary for the program did not appear to be available. Consequently, a major CCEM development effort was undertaken, the results of which would presumably be made available through commercial publishers to school districts throughout the United States.

By July 1974, CVE and public school staff had developed, field tested, and revised 45 instructional units representing a sampling of units spanning grades K-12. At that time the availability of the 45 units for publication was announced through the Publishers Alert Service, and publication bids were invited. RFPs were distributed to 39 publishers and a two-day bidders conference was held for those interested. No publisher chose to submit a proposal for the publication of the units, however. Their responses generally fell into the following three categories: (1) they wanted student consumable materials, not just student guides; (2) they preferred to market a complete, unified career education program rather than 45 loosely connected, disparate units; and (3) they wanted materials that augmented and complemented their own line of products, not materials that made extensive use of competitors' products.

In June of 1974 the American Institutes for Research was assigned the task of field testing and revising an additional 61 CVE developed units in accordance with the specifications to be provided by the publisher who was to market the first 45 units.

When no commercial publisher for the first contingent of instructional materials was forthcoming, it became necessary for NIE and AIR to effect major changes in the focus of the AIR project to address publishers' concerns with the initial set of materials. As a result, a six-month preliminary design period was added to the project to permit major redesign and re-engineering of the products to enhance their prospects for possible publication.

CVE's initial activities involved (1) eventual consumers in the design and development of the products; (2) a de facto market needs analysis that concluded that there was a major gap in commercially available materials suitable for the introduction of career education into the schools; and (3) a major commercial publisher for assistance in the review of instructional materials and a critique of product design. In terms of the typology model suggested in Chapter 1, there was early consultation, but eventual production was solely determined by CVE and school staff. Further, publishers were well aware of, or should have been well aware of, CVE's development work in the area, so there should have been ample lead time for publishers considering the introduction of career education to consider how the CVE products might fit into their product lines.

CVE, however, apparently did not actively involve a variety of publishers in the early design of products, and they apparently did not try to establish and maintain early and ongoing dialogue with a variety of commercial publishers. They generally did not share examples of prototype or specimen units for public and publisher review. In view of concern for the possible compromise of their project, however, and the need not to "over promise" on such an ambitious undertaking, such a position was, and still is, quite understandable.

While CVE paid considerable attention to expressions of consumer needs, relatively little attention appears to have been paid to questions of commercial viability (i.e., the production and marketing analysis considerations). The product was essentially determined by classroom practitioners and was not easily amenable to publisher modification.

Finally, the eventual bidding process did not allow very extensive lead time for publisher consideration of the products and, as was the standard Publishers Alert Service procedure at that time, made no provision for interaction with publishers in the preparation of their bids.

In other words, the model employed was essentially that of Cell 3, the model of publisher procurement in which the product is designed with input from a variety of sources but is completed, relatively inflexibly defined, and with little publisher decision lead time.

Because of the recognition of the problems inherent in this approach, the initial action of AIR, upon modification of its contract with NIE, was to begin immediate exploration and implementation of a somewhat more flexible bidding model, the models reflected in Cells 6 and 8, which conjointly might be considered "engineered product" models, where the product is tailored to the needs of users, administrators, and publishers, and where there is opportunity for negotiation and longer consideration lead time.

The product, however, was still to be engineered, largely, in such a way as to have appeal to a variety of potential publishers rather than to be tailored expressly for a particular publisher singled out in advance.

LATER EXPERIENCES IN THE CCEM PROJECT

Publishers represent the primary avenue for the dissemination and ultimate impact of educational products. As such, publishers are a basic mechanism for the introduction of change into America's schools. Publication companies are commercial businesses, however, not institutions of educational reform. The publication of major new products entails a significant outlay of capital and corresponding economic risk. The assurance of timely, sound, and continued marketability is paramount in any publisher's consideration of a new product.

The Cell 6 approach, then, was to expose the CCEM materials to a wide variety of representatives of the publishing industry and to communicate all the evidence that could be assembled concerning the need for, and the potential marketability of, those materials.

Four steps were followed. The first was a survey of school administrators and teachers to assess the acceptability of the units to potential consumers and to obtain initial indications of how the units could be improved. These surveys served to expose the materials to school personnel across the country who had not seen them before and to provide an indication of grass roots interest in career education and, thus, the potential market demand for the eventual materials.

The second step was to assess the acceptability of the draft CCEM units to publishers. This step enabled AIR to initiate dialogue with potential publishers of the material. It also allowed project staff to learn the constraints on publishers, what publishers required of the materials they had already published, and, in general, how they viewed the future of career education.

The third step was to begin the development of a market through the implementation of a systematic program of information dissemination. This involved presentations at professional meetings, the distribution of project information to several thousand state and local education leaders via the project Career

Education Newsletter, and other dissemination activities to keep the professional community informed about the project. This step was relevant to publisher dialogue because it provided additional input on the acceptability of the units to the professional practitioner.

The fourth step was to seek actively and encourage publishers, first via the Publishers Alert Service and subsequently via personal dialogue, with the ultimate goal of signing a contract with a publisher to produce and market the units.

Step 1--Surveys of Consumers. The survey of school administrators covered a .5% random sample of U.S. schools plus the ten largest school districts in the ten largest cities of the country. In all, 67 school districts were surveyed. Each was sent three representative draft CCEM units to inspect and evaluate. Data were obtained from 60 of the 67 districts.

The teacher survey was more intensive but involved fewer persons. Two workshops were conducted, each two days in duration. The first was for elementary teachers and the second for secondary teachers. In the workshop setting, all 61 draft units were examined and evaluated by experienced practicing teachers.

The results of these surveys are reported in detail in AIR 47900 Interim Report No. 1, November 1974.

Step 2--Survey of Publishers. The publisher survey is reported here in detail because it was an integral part of the AIR dialogue with publishers.

The first step of the survey was to identify those publishers who might be expected to show maximum interest in publishing the revised CCEM materials. These were believed to be (1) publishers who had requested the RFP for the 45 CCEM units that were revised and field tested by CVE; (2) publishers outside the CCEM RFP pool who already publish career education materials; and (3) publishers of other experimental-based materials. The first two groups were broken down into finer categories. The publishers who had requested the CCEM materials RFP were identified as (a) Major Educational Publishers and (b) Lesser and Thin-Market Publishers. The publishers outside the CCEM RFP pool were identified as (c) Publishers of

Student Materials in Career Education and (d) Publishers of Teacher Materials (only) in Career Education.

CVE provided the list of publishers who had requested the CCEM Materials RFP. Project staff compiled the other two lists from a study of EL-HI Textbooks in Print: 1974 and of career education trade journals. The final master list consisted of 66 publishers. The number of publishers by category is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

GROUPS OF PUBLISHERS IN THE FINAL CONTACT LIST

(1)	Publishers Requesting the CCEM Materials RFP		37
	a. Major Educational Publishers	21	
	b. Lesser and Thin-Market Publishers	16	
(2)	Publishers Outside the CCEM RFP Pool		25
	c. Publishers of Student Materials in Career Education	20	
	d. Publishers of Teacher Materials (only) in Career Education	5	
(3)	Publishers of Other Experimental-Based Materials		4

Project staff made contact with 31 publishers selected from the master list. Those publishers included 21 (or all) Major Educational Publishers; 5 Lesser and Thin-Market Publishers; 1 Publisher of Student Materials in Career Education; 1 Publisher of Teacher Materials in Career Education; and 3 Publishers of Other Experimental-Based Materials. Because they had shown interest in the CCEM materials and also because they represented major educational publishers in the United States, the majority of publishers selected for contact was from the CCEM pool.

An introductory telephone call was made to each of the selected publishers. In the conversation, the caller delineated the background of the project; described the 61 units, particularly with regard to their distribution across grade ranges and subject areas; explained AIR's mission to revise and field test these materials in preparation for publication; and emphasized AIR's concern to involve a publisher at the outset of the project. The publishers were asked about their familiarity with NIE's CCEM effort; about their involvement in the career education market; and about their interest in learning more about the CCEM project through discussions with key project staff.

Of the 31 publishers contacted, 7 expressed no interest in discussing the CCEM project, stating that their publishing schedules could not accommodate any new products, or consideration of any new products, for the next two or three years. None of the publishers contacted had adverse reactions to the CCEM materials. In fact, only a few recalled the CCEM RFP, even though it had been issued only a few months earlier.

The reactions in this initial publisher survey indicated that a wide range of publishers saw a potential market in career education and also was interested in learning about new career education projects.

Based on the tenor of the initial telephone conversations, the 15 publishers who had expressed the highest level of interest in the project were selected for in-depth interviews in which staff could personally display prototype materials and discuss the project.

Appointments for interviews were established in subsequent telephone conversations. The caller made appointments directly with the interviewees, who were either executive officers in the publishing house or managerial personnel responsible for publications in career education or comparable innovative materials.

The caller specified that the appointment would be from one to two hours in duration. The caller also delineated the purposes of the interview: (1) to describe the CCEM project; (2) to display sample CCEM materials (three unit samplers, the curriculum scope and sequence, and the project brochure); and (3) to discuss the possibility of publishing the revised CCEM materials in toto or in part.

The meetings varied in length from 1 to 2 1/2 hours. Much of the time was devoted to discussion of the possibility of establishing early cooperative arrangements between AIR and the eventually selected publisher for the purpose of joint input on the design and the revision of the materials. The discussion was hypothetical at that point, of course, since no commitments could be made either way.

The meetings could all be described as frank and warm. The publishers were generally very receptive and interested in the presentations. The extent of their prior knowledge of the CCEM materials varied. Some publishers gave evidence of quite detailed knowledge of CCEM efforts. More generally, however, knowledge was limited to the CCEM project rather than to the materials. There were also publishers who knew nothing of CCEM.

Among the publishers contacted were those representing various positions regarding career education. There were those who were quite heavily involved in career education. There were those who were due to publish significant new materials imminently. There was one company that was scheduled to publish a new series within a year; it represented a $1,000,000 developmental effort (the largest single developmental effort ever undertaken by that company). Finally, there were those who were not seriously involved in career education but who were considering a move into the field.

The view of the market for career education materials varied from publisher to publisher. For example, at one end was the view that career education is here to stay. At the other end was the view that career education may not be a viable field. There was also disagreement on the grade levels at which career education materials could be sold. One company saw the potential market at the K-6 grade level, while another saw the market at the 7-12 grade level. Some publishers were convinced that classroom kits of student materials are the only viable means of packaging career education materials, while others did not have an opinion on this matter.

At the time of the survey, only one publisher had material in the format of the CCEM units. Those materials included three volumes of teacher's guides with accompanying preprinted duplicating masters for reproducing student materials.

Step 3--Notice of Availability. When sufficient materials had been developed to warrant public announcement of the availability of the CCEM materials for publication, the appropriate announcement was made via the Publishers Alert Service. This announcement, sent by NIE to about 400 publishers, represented the second major contact with publishers concerning the CCEM units being revised by AIR. The particular announcement for these CCEM units, however, deviated in two respects from the usual procedures. First, it was made before the units had been revised and field tested. Second, it encouraged open discussion between AIR and interested publishers during the period of bidding.

Thirty-five publishers requested RFPs. The cover letter that went out with the RFP reiterated AIR interest in, and willingness for, dialogue. It stated,

> The 61 unrevised units are available at AIR for your inspection. We encourage you to contact and/or visit us. A visit would present the added advantage of your meeting our staff and discussing issues in depth; however, we are always available to respond to any questions by letter and to discuss any aspect by telephone.

AIR's approach was to remain open and responsive to any expression of interest from any publisher. AIR did not, however, initiate dialogue with any company during the period between the issuance of the RFP and the due date for proposals. This was in keeping with the spirit of the Publishers Alert Service in which no publisher was to be given an advantage or favored status relative to any other publisher.

It was anticipated that publishers who were interested in bidding would want to acquire fairly detailed knowledge of the project and would want to become acquainted with staff members. For this reason, a considerable amount of information about the project was sent to all publishers who requested the RFP.

The actual dialogue with publishers was minimal. Thirteen requests for the RFP were made by letter, two were by telephone, and one entailed a personal visit from a western regional sales manager. One of the letters asked if the entire project must be contracted to one publisher or if sections might be awarded to producers with particular expertise. Another asked if AIR anticipated holding a preproposal bidders conference.

The cover letter to each publisher, in addition to answering their specific questions, stated that a sample set of unrevised units would be sent upon request. Six publishers did request and were sent those sample units. The 15 publishers in the earlier survey, of course, had already received those sample draft units.

Subsequent to the initial period of requests for the RFP, several other opportunities for dialogue did arise. The Publisher for Career Education in the Gregg and Community College Division of McGraw-Hill visited AIR for half a day about one week after the Publishers Alert Service announcement was issued. AIR staff members met with representatives of two publishers at the Career Education National Forum held at the Center for Vocational Education in Columbus, Ohio. There was a four-hour meeting with the Managing Editor of Social Studies and the Vice-President and Director of Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company. At the same forum, briefer meetings were held with the Editor-in-Chief for Career Education and Guidance of Houghton Mifflin Company. Finally, following telephone conversations in which a strong interest was expressed and a visit was requested, Dr. Dunn visited the facilities of Educational Properties Incorporated and Hoffman Information Systems. In all, face-to-face interactions and dialogue occurred with representatives of five publishing companies.

Discussions with other publishers occurred over the telephone but these, of course, were not as extensive as were the personal encounters. Some of the telephone calls were initiated by AIR staff during the last two weeks in April. One publisher expressed concern that the revised materials would be distributed free to schools across the country during the national field test. He feared that such distribution would dilute the market. It was decided that project staff would quickly canvass the publishers who had received the RFP to obtain their views on the question. Only those companies were contacted in which the person who had received the RFP could be reached in one or two phone calls. Sixteen of the 35 persons were reached and none corroborated the concern of the one publisher about distributing free modules as part of the national field test.

As the due date of proposals neared, three publishers contacted AIR and indicated that they would have difficulty meeting the deadline but that they were very seriously considering whether to submit a proposal. As a result, the due date for proposals was extended one month for all publishers, and all publishers were so notified.

Where dialogue did occur, it concerned the kinds of career education products that the publisher is marketing and how the CCEM units might augment the company's current line. There were also some technical and logistical issues that were raised, such as whether AIR would prepare camera-ready copy for the publisher. In some instances, the question was asked how much weight would be placed on the amount of royalties in selecting a publisher. Publishers could generally be described as reserved in their discussions. None of them was very detailed or probing in their questions or very open concerning their own discussions about the material.

In the end, one formal bid was submitted. It was submitted by a publisher

(1) with whom extensive face-to-face dialogue had transpired,

(2) who already had a commitment to career education but who did not have a "complete" product line,

(3) who had asked for a time extension in order to make the necessary internal decisions, and

(4) who was a small company with a highly centralized corporate decision process involving only three persons, but who relied on external consultation to augment its judgment base.

Subsequent to the negotiation of all details of publication and approval by NIE, but prior to the initiation of materials production, the chief executive officer, and senior shareholder, of the publishing company suffered severe health reversals, necessitating a moratorium on all new project starts and the eventual liquidation of all business accounts.

Since one of the terms of the publication agreement was the production of materials for use in the national field test (because of the need for assured production of the materials on a timely basis), AIR resumed responsibility for the initial quantity production of the units. Such a move, while in the best interests of the project, resulted in the loss of a major inducement for thin-market publishers, namely early partial recovery of initial production costs through assured buy-back of field test material.

As a result of the loss of time associated with these events and the loss of one major publisher inducement at the early stage of product development,

subsequent publisher solicitation was predicated on somewhat different conditions. The procurement process began to approach more nearly the conditions of Cell 8. Instead of emphasizing the joint development opportunities that Cell 6 implies, publisher solicitation activities subsumed under Cell 8 imply greater need to show publishers how the products can be modified and tailored to fit their extant product line, and how materials might be packaged and/or portioned for alternative markets and target groups.

CONCLUDING EXPERIENCES IN THE CCEM PROJECT

With completion of the CCEM units and the fulfillment of all requirements for making materials available to any potentially interested bidder, the continued search for a publisher for the materials moved further toward the brokered product model. This became especially clear as the advice from a variety of publishers began to reflect consistent comments. First, while publishers need to market programs that are cohesive, articulated programs spanning multiple grades, no publisher encountered during the project had experience with producing and marketing a program spanning 13 grades. Furthermore, an instructional system that might consist of as many as 400 elements (teacher guides, student workbooks, and module tests) was intimidating. Reading programs, for example, typically span only three or perhaps four grades, and mathematics textbooks typically span only five or six grades. Even relatively complicated systems such as the Sullivan Reading Series typically involve comparatively few discrete components.

While AIR was sensitive to the potential complexity of the CCEM system and its broad grade configuration, careful consideration was given to packaging alternatives that would allow considerable parsimony in production, inventory, and distribution. The program, nevertheless, was a K-12 program, and no publisher had experience with the production and marketing of a product that spanned that many grade levels.

When it was pointed out that no publisher needed to publish all components, i.e., one publisher could publish the elementary materials while a second publisher could publish secondary materials, the response was, "Yes, but then we wouldn't have a complete program." Thus, one serious error in the early conceptualization of the Model I CCEM project may have been the original definition of the system as a comprehensive career education program.

In the summer of 1976, a decision was made to approach an entirely different type of publisher--the micropublisher. One major reason for this decision, as was pointed out in Chapter 2, was that these publishers are typically more risk-oriented than larger publishers and they are much more experienced in handling atypical products.

In October the decision was made to explore the convention solicitation model described in Chapter 2. The Commissioner's Conference on Career Education seemed to be the logical place to start, and the search procedure resulted in direct contact with approximately 50 publishers. These 50 were screened to 26 potentially appropriate publishers, 12 requesting materials for review. Strong interest was expressed on the part of half a dozen, and three publishers were sufficiently attracted to the products to carry out careful production cost analyses. While none of the interested publishers elected to bid on the materials, the strength of micropublisher interest reinforced the wisdom of this method of publisher solicitation.

In retrospect, it was realized that publishers maintaining booths at a career education conference are publishers who already have career education products they are trying to sell and, thus, may be less eager to acquire new career education products than other micropublishers. In view of this simple but unanticipated conclusion, it was decided that attendance at major educational conferences, such as NEA or ASCD would be more appropriate in that there would be a larger number of micropublishers attending who would not have career education products and hence might be more keenly interested in developing a new product line.

To facilitate this type of future publisher solicitation and also to make staff time available for the extended product brokering necessary, an extension of the CCEM project was negotiated and carried out.

In conclusion, experience on the CCEM project, ranging from Cell 1 to Cell 8 of the typology model, has generated keener insight into the nature and process of product placement and suggests a variety of alternatives that funding agencies and product developers might wish to consider in future product development ventures.

CHAPTER 4

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on experiences in the CCEM project and the analysis of publisher characteristics and the procurement process, a series of comments and recommendations might be made.

First, and most importantly, start the publisher search as early as possible. Indeed, the proposal on which the project is based should include clear-cut provisions for, and budgeting of, time and money for publisher search and product brokering. Furthermore, this should be considered as important an undertaking of the project as product testing and product revision. It should be the responsibility of a senior member of the project staff, one who can speak with authority regarding the project and influence the characteristics of the product.

Immediately upon award of the project, the developers should begin compiling publisher dosiers. Among other things, these dosiers might include publisher catalogues, which serve to familiarize the developer with a variety of publishers' products. In addition, senior staff should make frequent visits to publisher displays at trade fairs, conventions, and conferences. At these displays, project staff should talk to salesmen, learn more about the administrative organization of their respective publishers, their preferred markets, their production methods, and their general product lines. Finally, senior project staff should write personal letters to senior members of various selected publishing houses to acquaint those organizations with the project and the forthcoming products.

Second, project staff should develop a series of special materials to assist in placing the product. It is important to have a good project brochure; a product description booklet that outlines the product characteristics and describes where the product came from, what it is intended to do, and how it ties in with ongoing educational programs; and several alternative product mock-ups. The product mock-ups should have the benefit of quality artwork, printing, and design and perhaps a color photo, slide tape, or flip chart presentation that can be used to describe the product system to interested parties. If the project director

is to "sell" his product efficiently, he needs the typical salesman's "tools." These "tools" might also involve flow charts, colored photo posters, or display backboards. These materials can also be used for presentations at technical conferences and at professional meetings. Ideally, the flip chart/slide presentations will show sample products, how they fit into the overall comprehensive product being developed, how the product might be packaged, and how the product might fit into alternative publisher images, production modes, and marketing styles.

Third, project staff should plan their marketing campaign starting with an analysis of what stage, or "cell," of the solicitation model they might be in and then modify their marketing campaign as the project moves through various cell stages. In this regard, it is wise to invite publisher consultation as early as possible, keep publishers periodically informed regarding progress in the development of the product, and in general let them know that the developer is flexible and open to negotiation. It is essential that the product developer not be too rigid in the conceptualization of the form of the product as this will materially reduce publisher options.

Fourth, the product developer should be prepared for repeated inquiries and for inquiries from different levels within the same organization. The product developer should not expect reliable communication within companies. The developer must persevere; the decision process is time consuming and cannot be rushed. In AIR's experience, it was not uncommon for a single senior member of a major publishing house to contact staff four or five different times during the course of the project. In one instance, a publisher had four face-to-face visits--one in the publisher's office, two in the project office, and one at a mutually convenient location, with materials "submitted for review" on three separate occasions. Similarly, it was not uncommon to be in on-going written communication with one individual in a company, submit products for review to a second individual in that company, and have a third individual in the same company "discover" the availability of the product through some other channel at some later date and request materials for review after they had been rejected by a different department. Publishing groups, like other large organizations, often have difficulty keeping communication channels open and used. As a result, it is essential not to expect a single communication with a company to be sufficient to establish

that company's interest in the product. Be prepared for multiple inquiries, multiple submissions, resubmissions to different people, repeated expressions of interest, and prolonged product review and consideration periods. Also be prepared to invite publishers and/or publisher representatives to visit the project, be prepared to visit publishers, and be prepared to "lobby" for the product at those activities and in those places where a concentration of publishers can reasonably be expected, such as at conventions and trade fairs.

So much, then, for advice to project directors. Now what should a sponsor expect to do to help with the placement of a product?

First of all, be patient. It takes time, far longer than one might expect. The larger the product, the more difficult it is to place. Some authors try for several years to get their manuscripts published. Single volumes, whether they are novels, autobiographies, or textbooks, do not require extensive publisher investment in either production or marketing. Educational product production and marketing, on the other hand, require proportionally greater investments on the part of publishers. As a result, they are extremely cautious in such undertakings. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect the product placement activity to require a great deal of time, energy, and effort, and to involve a great many false starts.

Second, do not let preference for a "big name" publisher bias judgment. A "name" publisher may not be the best or even the most desirable publisher of innovative educational products, at least from the point of view of maintenance of product integrity, rapid public availability, and low consumer cost. Big name publishers, however, may provide greater political recognition for the project, and probably greater publicity for the product, but production time may be doubled or even tripled. Thus, the sponsor should give special attention to the identification and prioritization of the real goals regarding a product.

Third, be prepared to assist in the brokering process. Sponsors are often in particularly helpful positions in that they may frequently refer publishers to a product without appearing to be unduly partial. In the process of monitoring a variety of projects, it is often possible for technical monitors to become familiar with micropublishers who may be publishing products of related projects,

and who could easily expand their product lines by picking up a related set of materials.

Finally, it is important for the sponsor to realize that although plans can be made and schedules outlined for the solicitation of publishers, brokering a product is a dynamic process that, once initiated, is often sporadic, quixotic in nature, and heavily dependent on serendipity and chance. The difference between success and failure in placing a product with a publisher may often be the degree to which a product developer has the time and sponsor support to respond flexibly to those unexpected opportunities that emerge during the life of the project and, indeed, in the months thereafter.